

PATRIOT

439th Airlift Wing - Westover Air Reserve Base
December 2004 - Vol. 31, No. 12



439th AW MISSION: Actively support national objectives on a global scale with ready, mobility forces

The holiday season is again upon us. For most, it is a time of joy and celebration. However, for many, it is a time when stress levels only increase. It's safe to say each one of us has felt stress from our current operations tempo as we respond to our nation's calling.

Unfortunately, suicide rates increase during the holidays. While we've been fortunate here, as an Air Force, we're off to a poor start. I take the well-being and welfare of everyone in the Patriot Wing very seriously and will continue to do all I can to ensure we address critical issues. But, I can't do it alone. I need each of you to look out for one another and step in when someone needs help.

The Chief of Staff in his latest "Sight Picture" calls it being one another's "wingman." I am including that "Sight Picture" because it effectively outlines measures each of us can take to look out for one another. Please read and heed these steps. We cannot afford to lose any of you. I thank you for your continued commitment. Kim and I wish you and your loved ones the best during this holiday season.



Col. Wade Farris
439th Airlift Wing commander

Stressed Airmen - Who's Your Wingman?

Stress is nothing new to military life and there are many factors that contribute to this. But lately, stress has been taking its toll on our Airmen. Our suicide rate is skyrocketing while accidental deaths are more than 36 percent above what they were four years ago. We lost 57 people to suicide in the past year - a dramatic, and tragic, increase from last year. We lost another 99 Airmen to accidents. Combined, that's an order of magnitude greater than our combat losses in both Iraq and Afghanistan since Sept. 11, 2001. We're causing ourselves more harm than the enemy. We must do a better job of looking after one another - be better wingmen.

Our jobs are inherently stressful. This is a fact of our profession. We have over 30,000 Airmen deployed across the globe, with over 7,000 of them in a combat environment. Many Airmen are now on their sixth deployment in 10 years. Those at home face increased work hours, inconsistent manning, and a continuous workload. More stress comes from uncertainty. In addition, increased AEF deployment periods, force restructuring, non-commissioned officer retraining, and OSD's BRAC assessments and potential base closures may suggest an ambiguous or unstable future to some Airmen. This can often

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Gen. John P. Jumper

Air Force
Chief of Staff

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Briefs

Christmas Angel Tree program helps the needy

The Westover Family Support Center staff is again conducting the Angel Tree Program. The program began Nov. 1 and benefits wing assigned people (including (reserve and Department of Defense civilians) and their families who need additional Christmas support.

Sponsors interested in adopting an "Angel" for the Christmas program are provided the "Angel's" gender, age, and a request for a special gift. The family support staff is the liaison between sign-ups and sponsors to ensure program anonymity.

For more information please contact family support at Ext. 3024 or toll-free at (866) 690-2161.

Base mourns passing of Omega Travel manager

Catherine Fitzgibbon, who operated Omega Travel at Westover, died in her home in Chicopee, Nov. 2. She was 50 years old.

Born in Holyoke, Mass., and a daughter of the late James and Dorothy (Sullivan) Fitzgibbon, she was educated in Holyoke schools and graduated from Holyoke High School in 1972. For the past 10 years she worked at Omega Travel, where she was manager. She leaves three daughters, Corie Fontaine of Springfield, Tessa Fontaine of Virginia and Jenna Fontaine of Holyoke. She also leaves four sisters and several nieces and nephews.

The funeral was held Nov. 6 at James P. Hobert & Sons Funeral Home with a Mass at St. Patrick Chapel (St. Jerome's Church). Interment was in Calvary Cemetery.

RETREAT REMEMBRANCE - Senior Airmen Susan J. Weis and Andrew J. Hackett, Patriot Wing Honor Guard, fold the American flag during the Nov. 6 retreat ceremony at the base ellipse. Col. Wade Farris, 439th Airlift Wing commander, and a formation of Westover reservists are also pictured participating in the annual ceremony.

-- photo by Senior Airman Brian P. Boynton, 439th Communications Squadron

Westover Makeover

Construction tops \$24 million; new security forces and base ops in the works

Article and photo

by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Biscoe

The scenery is changing at the nation's largest Air Force Reserve base.

More than \$24 million is helping that happen.

With that funding now in its pocket, new Westover construction is in full force. One of the most visible signs of the new additions is on Patriot Avenue, where construction crews are rearranging the earth to make way for the new security forces building. It will rise where the active-duty Air Force once housed some of its dormitories.

Elsewhere on the base, plans call for renovations and demolitions of some of the antiquated buildings. With its increased visibility in recent years including the C-5 surges for both Gulf Wars, Westover has become the focal point for many different types of operations.



TAKING SHAPE – Construction workers work on the foundation of the new security forces squadron building on Patriot Avenue. The 21,300-square foot building is set to be completed in October 2005 and is among more than \$24 million in construction and renovations at Westover.

In order to accomplish that mission, the base has to adapt and modernize, said Col. Wade Farris, 439th Airlift Wing commander. "We are strategically located, which means an aircraft can take off from here and get to points in Europe quicker and with more cargo," Colonel Farris said. "But it's not just the flying operations. We have become a big player in the Air Force Reserve and have a well-earned reputation. I think the money that has come our way speaks well to this."

All these changes are needed to sustain operations at Westover, which became the nation's first Air Force Reserve base in April 1974. Westover covers 2,515 acres and has one of the longest runways on the East Coast.

"The base is getting a crucial and major facelift," said Col. Dana S. Marsh, 439th Mission Support Group commander. "We pursued a very aggressive repair and construction agenda this year – dollar-wise, more than any year since this wing's conversion to the C-5 in 1987."

The money comes from several sources that include operations and maintenance funds and from Congress. As an example, local congressmen John Olver and Richard Neal assisted in the funding for the \$4.1 million control tower, completed in 2002.

This year's planned construction includes:

- The 21,300 square-foot security forces building to be completed by October 2005
- A \$4.4 million base operations building, with funding assistance from Massachusetts Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. Estimated completion: October 2006
- A \$1.3 million two-stall fire station to be built near the base contracting building. Estimated completion: fall 2005
- Renovation of the Industrial Road Gate to include a new road, gatehouse, vehicle inspection facility and a visitors center. Estimated completion: September 2005
- Renovations to the dining hall, finance, and fitness center. Estimated completion: September 2005
- Demolition of the heat plant on Hangar Avenue which was decommissioned in 2002. Estimated completion: July 2005
- A new facility to house the bioenvironmental engineering staff, which is housed in the old base dental clinic which will be demolished. Estimated completion: September 2005.

STRESS continued from page 2

lead to other stress factors, like family or relationship problems, financial or legal problems, and substance abuse. We are taking steps to mitigate some of these factors, but stress will always be a concern. Stress is a problem we can manage.

The Air Force leadership is confronting this problem. We cannot relieve the tempo of deployment. When our nation calls, we must respond. However, we can and will work to provide our Airmen with the support they need to carry their load.

We are reinvigorating our suicide prevention program that had dramatically dropped the number of suicides over the past seven years. The program worked, but it needs a shot in the arm. Along with suicide prevention, we're continuing to focus on safety and risk management, with zero mishaps as our goal.

Commanders - you bear the responsibility for the total welfare of our greatest asset - Airmen. You are responsible for their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. Use your base resources. You should know when your Airmen need help, and where to send them to get it.

Supervisors - you are our first line of defense. Like commanders, you are responsible for the well-being of the people you supervise. It is you who look every Airman in the eye every day. It is you who can spot the first signs of trouble, and you who are in the best position to listen and engage.

Airmen - be good wingmen. Take care of yourself and those around you. Step in when your wingman needs help. Signs of stress and suicide should not be dismissed. Neither should senseless risks to life and limb because of improper safety and irresponsible

behavior.

In today's expeditionary Air Force, commanders and supervisors are often deployed. We rely on those who remain behind as acting commanders and supervisors to be familiar with the stresses confronting their Airmen and to be familiar with all the tools necessary to deal with these stresses.

I need everyone's help on this. Take care of your wingmen on the ground so we can continue to confront America's enemies from air and space. Stress is not going away; it is a reality we must accept and manage.

We are the world's greatest Air and Space Power because of you, America's Airmen. The needless loss of one Airman is one loss too many. Look out for each other - look out for your wingman.

First shirt learning the ropes during desert deployment

EDITOR'S NOTE: Senior Master Sgt. Clifford Wittman, deployed first sergeant sent an e-mail in early November describing conditions at Al-Dhafra, United Arab Emirates.

Although the threat here is reduced, the tempo is very high - it had taken me about three weeks to get past the jet lag and learn my way around, not only with my duties as first sergeant but also with the installation.

When I first arrived I was assigned as first sergeant for the 380th ECS (Comm), and additional duty for the ESVS (Services). Although I feel my duties at Westover serving for the mission support squadron, support group and airlift wing staff were good training for working with multiple commanders, being deployed has brought on its own uniquenesses.

First off, coming in cold, I needed to learn the personalities of not only the commanders but of both senior staffs, as well as introducing myself to all the members of the two units. Although a normal day lasts about 10-12 hrs with 24 hour-a-day operations meeting the night troops required even longer days. After



Courtesy photo

MEAL FOR A TROOP - Senior Master Sgt. Clifford Wittman, deployed first sergeant, serves a meal to 1st Lt. Brian C. Hellenbrand at Al-Dhafra, United Arab Emirates.

finally settling in I was able to spend an entire day working with the Comm Satellite repair section (IE pictures), which allowed me to get to know the troops better. The comfort I was feeling as I was settling in abruptly changed at the end of the fourth week.

At this time the EMSG Commander made the decision to swap me with the first sergeant for security forces, not only

did I have to start the learning curve all over again but the SFS is nearly double the size of the other two squadrons combined. With the squadron being split between days and nights the need for me to do longer hours has increased also, I attempt to make the guardmounts for each shift once or twice a week. This way I am going to the troops instead of them having to come to me, it seems to work very well, and I am able to deal with issues as they come up. The members also seem to be more relaxed in their own environment instead of coming to my office to talk. From the time I stepped of the plane every member of this wing works together as a team. It was a pleasant surprise to see how quickly the total force theory went into practice.

The deployed people live in tents with anywhere from 6-8 people to a tent usually dependent on rank, the tents are sectioned off with black sheets for darkness and privacy. While I have been here I have had the opportunity to go into the city on several occasions, and the local population seems to be very friendly and helpful to the Americans.

Savannah site survey speeds wing exercise preparation for 2006

by Maj. Wilson Camelo

With a pending Operational Readiness Inspection in 2006, the Patriot Wing is taking every opportunity to gain a competitive advantage to ensure a positive outcome.

With that in mind, 43 exercise evaluators and functional area representatives headed to the Combat Readiness Training Center in Savannah, Ga. Oct. 19-21 for a site survey of the location, which in March will serve as the site of a final "dress rehearsal" before the ORI.

That "dress rehearsal" - a deployment exercise to the CRTC in Savannah March 10-13 dubbed Operation Southern Comfort 2005 - will be an opportunity to practice and test the wing's ability to mobilize, deploy, and survive and operate in a simulated hostile location before the ORI.

The site survey allowed the participants to look at the facilities for space requirements, evaluate available equipment to determine what doesn't need to be brought from Westover, determine local requirements, and meet with their functional counterparts.

The CRTC in Savannah is an ideal place

to test the wing's ability to respond to operational requirements - before ORI inspectors formally evaluate that capability, said Maj. Richard C. Tilburg, wing performance manager and exercise evaluation team chief.

That's because it is a year-round training location built to help units enhance their combat readiness by providing a forward operating location and a realistic setting to prepare for an ORI.

"The site visit significantly aided us with our planning for Operation Southern Comfort," Major Tilburg said. "The functional experts down there were able to outline local requirements that we couldn't anticipate, such as dig permits. Our people had several 'oh, yeah' moments when they learned of some of these requirements."

With the site survey out of the way, final preparations are being made for the March exercise. Weekly and monthly planning meetings are taking place through March to work out the final details. Details that no doubt will be easier to hammer out because of the site survey, Major Tilburg said. "It was very beneficial to get the 'inside scoop' from the CRTC."



Illustration by Master Sgt. W.C. Pope

Mobility reminders

All reservists are responsible for ensuring their mobility records are up to date. Some of the most important items include the vRed certificate, shot record, weapons qualification card (Air Force Form 522), and passport. Reservists with questions about their mobility records should contact their unit deployment managers.

ASTS NCO hasn't forgotten friends still in AOR

Cheering Red Sox during playoffs helped sergeant feel closer to home

by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Biscoe

A technical sergeant home from a 50-day deployment to Kuwait hasn't forgotten his comrades defending freedom thousands of miles from America.

"I've got friends over there still working 24 hours a day," said Tech. Sgt. Jose A. Cabrera, his eyes welling up with emotion. "You learn to appreciate the freedoms you have in this country. The sacrifice is putting your life on the line."



Sergeant Cabrera

Sergeant Cabrera deployed to Ali-Al Salem Air Base as noncommissioned officer in charge of medical administration, handling paperwork for patients. He provided "everything patients needed to get from Kuwait to Ramstein."

"We were getting patients from Ali-Al Salem to Ramstein, and had all of the flights coming in from Balad (Air Base, Iraq)," he said.

"We dealt with just about everyone – Korean and Japanese military – we showed them how it's done," he said. Westover reservists

also worked with reservists from California, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

When Sergeant Cabrera stepped off the plane for his first look at Kuwait Sept. 2, it was 130 degrees – at midnight.

"I was in the real world – all these things started going through my mind," he said. "You start thinking of the terrorists – you just hope and pray you can get from one point to another."

One pastime that helped him feel closer to home was following the Boston Red Sox through the American League playoffs in October. Sergeant Cabrera could hear other people cheering on his home team. "I was up at 3 a.m. watching the Red Sox," he said. "You could hear people yelling on the other end of the tents when Johnny Damon hit a home run."

Other activities helped to pass the time. The units at Ali-Al Salem formed a flag football league. "It helped take our minds off what was going on," he said.

He returned to the United States Oct. 19.

Sergeant Cabrera lives in Springfield. He said he would return to Kuwait on the basis of the camaraderie he remembered so fondly.

"To serve with the guys I served with, I'll do it again," he said. "They made it a lot easier."



Courtesy photo

TEAM SPIRIT - Deployed members of the 439th Aeromedical Staging Squadron cheer on their home teams all the way from Ali-Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait. From left to right are Tech Sgt. Rebecca Pina, Senior Airman David Meulenaere, Maj. Frank Haluska, 2nd Lt. John Defina, Master Sgt. Shaoun Brothers, Senior Airman Patrick Carlin; kneeling: Lt. Col. Rene Bloomer and Maj. Kristin Messer.

Patriot Wing firefighters help avert disaster at desert base

by Tech. Sgt. Gino Mattorano
380th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA – Two potential disasters were averted last week thanks to the quick thinking of two Airmen and the timely response of fire department personnel.

Two deployed master sergeants from Westover were involved as well. Airman 1st Class Carsten Western, a 380th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron member, noticed smoke coming from a latrine near the flightline, and quickly reported it to the fire department.

The fire department responded to the scene with a full array of fire fighting equipment, prepared for the worst.

"When we respond to an incident scene, we assume the worst until we find out otherwise," said Master Sgt. Dennis Primiano, who was the assistant fire chief on duty at the time of the incident. "It's better to have too much equipment out there and find out we don't need it, than to need more equipment and not have it available." Sergeant Primiano is assigned to the 380th Civil Engineer Squadron, and is deployed from the 439th Civil Engineering Squadron at Westover.

Upon their arrival at the scene, firefighters discovered that the

building was filled with smoke, so they sent three firefighters into the building to assess the situation, and found that the culprit fire starter was a faulty vent fan motor.

"The motor simply failed and then caught on fire," said Sergeant Primiano. "When our guys arrived on the scene they were able to quickly extinguish the fire. The building had a lot of smoke damage, but the fire didn't spread enough to do significant damage."

In a similar incident Oct. 29, Senior Airman Daniel Myers, an aerospace ground equipment technician from the 380th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, put out a fire in an aircraft air conditioning unit that had malfunctioned outside a hangar.

"By the time our guys arrived on the scene, Airman Myers already had the fire out," said Master Sgt. Mark Czmyr, 380th ECES fire chief. "Thanks to the awareness and quick action of two Airmen on this base, two potentially major incidents were prevented. Sometimes people think fire safety is a hassle, but the training and preparation pays off when there's an incident."

Sergeant Czmyr is also deployed from Westover.

In order to provide timely response in the tent city compound, and both the East and West ramp aircraft parking areas, the fire department maintains three separate fire stations.

Teamwork, CPR save man's life

Civilian, NCO apply skills to co-worker

Article and photo

by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Biscoe

The CPR skills and teamwork of two 439th Services Squadron members recently helped save the life of a co-worker.

Recreation assistant William Fagan teamed up with Tech. Sgt. Neal G. Normandin Oct. 4 to save Larry Helmer when he was stricken by a heart attack Oct. 4.

A routine morning began the day for Mr. Helmer, manager at the Four Seasons Outdoor Recreation Store. He was loading some shelving units with a forklift with Mr. Fagan. Suddenly, it was anything but routine.

"I sat down on the ground," Mr. Helmer said. "I told Bill, 'I don't feel so well.'" Mr. Helmer collapsed. "Bill saw me keel over. That's the last thing I remember," he said.

Mr. Fagan quickly summoned help

from his nearby co-worker. "Bill came in (to the building) running for help," said Sergeant Normandin, noncommissioned officer in charge of the fitness center. While Mr. Fagan called 911, the sergeant checked Mr. Helmer's pulse. "He still had a faint pulse," Sergeant Normandin said.

"I told him, 'Larry, hang in there.' His heart was quivering. And his face was blue."

Then, things took a turn for the worse. "Everything just shut down," Sergeant Normandin said.

That was when Mr. Fagan performed CPR. Sergeant Normandin checked his pulse. He could find no sign of one.

"It all seemed like an eternity. It's just not the same thing as CPR class."

-- Tech. Sgt. Neal G. Normandin

Emergency medical technicians from the fire department arrived during the second set of chest compressions and took over the CPR. After Mr. Helmer was shocked, his pulse returned and he started breathing on his own again with oxygen supplied by the EMTs.

"The paramedics came flying in like they were sliding into second base. They put the defibrillator on him," Sergeant Normandin said. "The EMTs hooked him up to their defibrillator while CPR continued. 'It all seemed like an eternity. It's just not the same thing as CPR class.'"

The Westover paramedics revived Mr. Helmer and transported him to Bay State Hospital in Springfield. He remained there for observation for nine days.

"It's plain to see that if this had happened at just about any other place in my work area, that I would be dead," Mr. Helmer said. "There are lot areas where I work by myself. It's one of those circumstances that someone was with me. Otherwise I would be under the ground if it wasn't for the help I got."

Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Menard, Westover Services Director, credited Sergeant Normandin and Mr. Fagan with saving the life of their co-worker. "My services people - from both the civilian and military sides of the house - are true heroes. The fire chief and emergency responders have credited them for keeping Larry alive and buying him enough time for them to administer the defibrillator. I couldn't be more proud!"

Mr. Helmer has returned to work at Westover.



HEARTS AND MINDS — Larry Helmer, center, is flanked by William Fagan, left, and Tech. Sgt. Neal G. Normandin, 439th Services Squadron. The CPR skills of Mr. Fagan and quick attention from Sergeant Normandin are credited with saving the life of Mr. Helmer, who suffered a heart attack Oct. 4.

Briefs

Westover BIG chapter invites new members

New members are welcome with the Blacks in Government (BIG) chapter that meets monthly at Westover.

BIG's goals are to promote equality in all aspects of American life, excellence in public service, and to open doors of opportunity for Americans from all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The nationwide membership consists of 3 million federal, state, and city employees, said Tech. Sgt. Keith A. Langford. "Now you can become one of these members as we expand our chapter - we look forward to meeting you," Sergeant Langford said. He is a life member and chapter president.

The base chapter meets monthly on the A UTAs at 4:30 p.m. in the civilian personnel conference room in Bldg. 1850 on Patriot Avenue.

For more information, call Sergeant Langford at Ext. 3292.

Commanders Call set for December A UTA

Commanders Call will be held at 3:30 p.m. Dec. 4 in the Base Hangar. It is a mandatory formation for all assigned 439th AW reservists.

Holiday ornaments sale helps fund scholarships

The 2004 Chiefs holiday ornaments have gone on sale for \$5 to help fund college scholarships and enlisted promotion recognition. This is the 20th year that the Patriot Wing's chief master sergeants have sold holiday ornaments as a fundraiser for Westover members.

This year's ornaments are silver with a navy blue print depicting the Air Force symbol and the American flag. Ornaments can be purchased from chiefs or by calling Chief Master Sgt. Kathy Wood at Ext. 2876.

The Chiefs Council has a variety of Patriot Wing merchandise available for sale via an on-line source. Anyone interested in Christmas gifts, may call 439th Airlift Wing Command Chief Master Sgt. Jeff Sherwin at Ext. 2214 or Chief Wood.

People helping people

Reservists attend HRDC workshop

by Senior Airman Tom Ouellette

A giant step at re-energizing the Patriot Wing's Human Resource Development Council took place in October when four Westover reservists attended a HRDC workshop in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Col. Robert Sousa, 2nd Lt. Robert E. Sinclair, Chief Master Sgt. Kathy Wood, and Senior Amn. Lauren E. Narkiewicz, joined more than 300 peers from Air Force Reserve Command at the workshop, gaining valuable information and a jolt of enthusiasm to implement back home.

"The workshop was about people taking care of people - how to support others from your unit. It was a great experience," said Airman Narkiewicz.

The HRDC is designed to foster a workplace environment that enhances opportunity, diversity, and inclusion for Airmen. "From the highest level to the lowest level, no one wants to feel on the outside," said Lieutenant Sinclair. HRDC is about making everyone feel included and valued. The HRDC uses numerous ways to achieve its objectives, from strengthening mentoring techniques to improving outreach programs, to name only a few.

For several months, Patriot Wing members have taken several steps to revitalize the HRDC, with the workshop boosting the process. Committees were already created to research issues, develop action plans and create innovative ideas, but the Colorado Springs workshop gave attendees additional ideas that thrilled the council members.

Yet some work remains. Reservists wishing to join the council or submit ideas are encouraged to contact Col. James R. Hosey, 439th Airlift Wing vice commander, and chairman of Westover's HRDC. Any rank is eligible. The HRDC expects to finalize its goals and objectives in December.

Airman meets AFRC leadership at workshop

by Senior Airman Tom Ouellette

Senior Airman Lauren E. Narkiewicz had no idea what she was getting into the day she heard another military abbreviation.

"I didn't even know what the HRDC was," she said. But soon after joining the Patriot Wing's Human Resources Development Council, Airman Narkiewicz found herself working with the Air Force Reserve Command's top leadership, including AFRC commander Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, as part of an Airmen's panel to discuss HRDC issues at a command level HRDC workshop in Colorado Springs, Colo., in October.

Command officials selected Airmen Narkiewicz from just six throughout AFRC to attend the workshop.

It's her goal now to increase awareness about Westover's HRDC, she said.

"I think the HRDC is beneficial to people. Getting it known and educating people about it would be a good thing," said Airman Narkiewicz, a fitness specialist with the 439th Services Squadron.

HRDC is designed to foster a workplace environment that enhances

Once done, reservists' issues will get focused attention, promising a better workplace for Westover people.

"The HRDC is gaining momentum and I see an enhanced environment. We're enthusiastic!" Colonel Hosey said.

opportunity, diversity, and inclusion for Airmen. At the workshop, enlisted members grouped together to brainstorm ideas and ways to make HRDC reach its full potential.

"I've met people from bases all over the world. We focused on diversity in the workplace and mentoring- on how people can help people," she said.



Airman
Narkiewicz

Airman Narkiewicz said that many members view peoples' differences as a disadvantage, but the workshop taught her the opposite. Workplace diversity is an advantage, creating more viewpoints and ideas to use for missions, she said. Also, Airman Narkiewicz said she learned that improved mentoring can help Airmen feel valued and reach their goals.

"Airmen are the future of the Air Force. We must make people feel more included. And anyone can mentor, even a senior Airman," she said.

Commander invites junior Airmen for breakfast at club

Col. Wade Farris, 439th Airlift Wing commander, invites the wing's junior enlisted Airmen to join him for breakfast at the Westover Club Jan. 9.

"This will serve as an incentive to our new Airmen and will also be a chance to receive some first-hand mentoring from the wing commander," said Master Sgt. Lori D. Boucher, wing career assistance advisor. Topics will include career progression, mentoring, and "Starting Off On The Right Foot."

Sergeant Boucher said the target audience

will be individuals recently returning from basic training and technical school, but commanders may include those members in the grade of airman basic through senior airman.

Each unit in the wing nominates one airman to attend the breakfast. The information must include the member's name, rank, and home phone number. The unit commander's nomination information is due to Sergeant Boucher no later than Dec. 6. Members who are on active duty receiving per diem will be required to pay \$5 for the breakfast.

Airmen need to be in place at the dining facility no later than 6:15 a.m. Dress will be uniform of the day, and a quick uniform check will take place before the breakfast, which takes place from 6:30 to 7:15 a.m.

For more information, call Sergeant Boucher at Ext. 3435.

JEAC members plan first Combat Dining-In

The first ever Combat Dining-In at Westover is set for the April A UTA.

Members of the Junior Enlisted Advisory Council (JEAC) are planning the event, which is scheduled to include games, food, guest speakers, and refreshments. It will take place in the Base Hangar.

More information will be available as the date draws closer. Anyone with questions about the dining-in should call Staff Sgt. Richard Byrd or Senior Airman Sadia Del Rosario at Ext. 2417.

Water Woman

Reservist looks to nature, God in passion for canoeing

by Senior Master Sgt. Sandi Michon

If Master Sgt. Holly Crouch were up a stream without a paddle, she'd probably welcome the opportunity to stroke with her arms – and think it was great practice for her next canoe race.

In fact, the 46-year-old career advisor with the 439th Aeromedical Staging Squadron thrives on endurance and has competed in 70 and 90-mile canoe races for the past 22 years, frequently placing the top three spots.

"I'm not quick, but I'll outlast you," Sergeant Crouch said, who looks like a poster woman for outdoor sports. Her blue eyes flash from her well-tanned face as she recounts more than 3,500 canoe miles in 22 years – and that's only counting the major races, and not the triathlons.

In the 70-mile race called the General Clinton Regatta, she has compiled three solo firsts, a second and a fourth, and placed third in women's doubles. The race runs each May on the Susquehanna River from Cooperstown to Bainbridge N.Y., and Sergeant Crouch laughs about her first race. "We had two coolers in the canoe and layers of clothing. I had no idea how much 40 extra pounds would weigh us down," she recalls. "We were second-to-last off the river and finished in 14 hours."

Over the next few years, Sergeant Crouch learned to train heavy and travel light, and got her best time down to 9 hours, 31 minutes. "Efficiency is the name of the game in canoeing," she said. She now uses a pit crew to provide food during the race and outfits the canoe with only a can of Ensure Plus, a screwdriver, spray lubricant, and duct tape. "I love duct tape – it can solve almost any problem you encounter," she said.

She trains year-round with weightlifting for strength and aerobics for endurance. Running and skiing keep her legs strong which, according to Sergeant Crouch, is very important to the mechanics of canoe racing.

It's also a vital part of the 90-mile race she competes in each September which spans three days and includes portaging – carrying the canoe through trails between water runs. The Adirondack Canoe Classic runs from Old Forge to

Saranac Lake, N.Y., which runs down the Fulton Chain, a series of lakes connected by a river. According to Sergeant Crouch, lake racing is much slower and the 90-mile event is an accumulation of each day's time. The first day includes 30 miles canoeing and five miles portage along hiking trails, and the two successive days are slightly less. She has competed solo five times, each time taking first place. She has 10 women's doubles races, with most in the top three, and placed in the top five in seven years of mixed doubles. But, 1987 was her crowning year. "My teammate, John, and I beat everyone in the race, including the men's solo and pro

until the job is done," and her mom's motto was, "never give up." Growing up in Hamilton, N.Y. with four siblings, Sergeant Crouch was all about sports and outdoor activities. Besides stacking 10 cords of wood each winter, she hiked, took diving and swimming lessons and belonged to an outdoor club.

While attending college in Oregon, she loved rock climbing and camping. As a special education teacher in Shelburne, N.Y., Sergeant Crouch has been very active in her community schools as a field hockey and volleyball coach for high school and college. She is also involved in the high school ski team and has escorted various sports trips to Australia, New Zealand, Austria, England and Ireland.

Her siblings are also very athletic and it was her older brother, Calvin, who introduced her to canoeing. Her first race was in an old aluminum canoe, and Crouch says it was her first and last time with aluminum.

She has since learned the value of canoeing technology, opting now for Kevlar-composite racing canoes with six-ounce graphite paddles. A solo canoe weighs 28 pounds while a tandem one weighs 33 pounds – which sounds light until it has to be carried while running through miles of hiking trails.

Details such as paddle placement are critical to swift navigation through riverbends and currents. "I love the water and

love being out in nature," she said. "It makes me feel closer to God. It's just He and I, and the elements out there," said the lay nun, an associate sister of St. Joseph of Crondole. If there's no ice on the river, she even paddles in winter.

As a reservist for 14 years, Sergeant Crouch shares her love of nature with her love of country. Because her outdoor sports allow her to enjoy her country, she is proud to defend it. "It's the best thing I've done in my life," she said of her military service, but paused when asked to compare it to canoe racing.

"Actually, I've learned a lot about myself in both the Reserve and in canoeing. They both test you and help you see what you're made of," she said. "Like the river and the reserve – you never know what's around the next bend – you just have to be prepared the best you can."



Courtesy photo

PADDLING PASSION - Master Sgt. Holly Crouch is an avid canoeist who said the sport allows her to connect with God and nature. She has canoed for 22 years.

teams," she said, almost with disbelief this many years later. She has also competed in canoe races at the state and national levels, placing in those as well.

Sergeant Crouch loves the excitement of the challenge. "You dig down to your inner soul and give it all you've got," she said, but added that there's always a little more you can give. "It takes a lot of effort, focus and concentration. You have to give total commitment to what you're doing no matter what the outcome."

At first she said there was no hard part to canoe racing when you love it so much, but after some thought, Sergeant Crouch reconsidered. "Maybe the hardest part is feeling that I'm not meeting my own expectations," she said.

The seeds of her expectations were sown on her grandfather's farm. While baling hay, his adage was, "Don't stop

Patriot Wing tests most Airmen in Air Force

Base tests 91 percent of 439th AW reservists

by Senior Airman Tom Ouellette

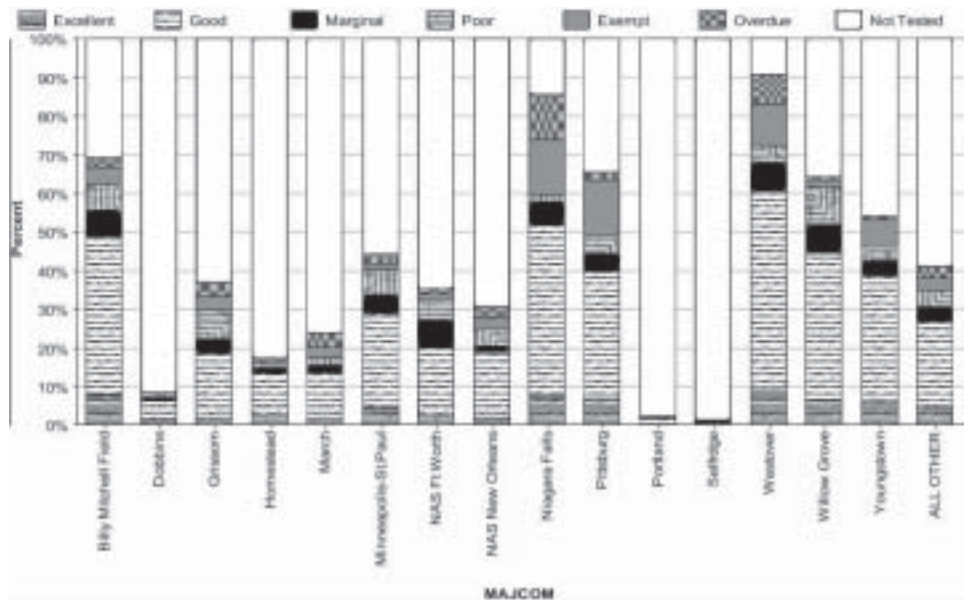
Add fitness to the list of mission accomplishments for the Patriot Wing.

Westover's "Fit to Fight" was tops in the entire Air Force as of early November. Westover also topped in Air Force Reserve Command, testing more reservists in the program than any other AFRC base.

Westover tested 91 percent of its reservists. Only Niagara Falls ARB, N.Y., came close, at 85 percent, and no other reserve base managed to surpass 70 percent.

The fitness test numbers gave the Patriot Wing more good news. Results show more than 60 percent scored "excellent" or "good" marks, also outpacing other AFRC bases.

The fit to fight program includes a 1.5-mile timed run, push-ups, crunches and the measuring of the abdominal circumference. The program began in 2004.



Graphic illustration courtesy Maj. Patrick Ryan, wing executive officer

The chart above shows Westover led the way in the Air Force Reserve Command in early November for the Air Force's "Fit to Fight" program. Ninety-one percent of the 439th Airlift Wing reservists underwent the new physical fitness testing in 2004.



Courtesy photo

TBILISI MISSION – Westover crew members stand with American Ambassador Richard Miles. From left are Tech. Sgt. Kennan Steiger, Maj. Juan Galindez, Master Sgt. Kenneth MacDougald, Tech. Sgt. James Whelton and Master Sgt. Robert Stawasz.

Mission to Tbilisi

Patriot Wing air crew flies to Caucasus to equip Iraq-bound commando battalion

by Master Sgt. Tom Allocco

When 300 commandos from the former Soviet republic of Georgia deploy to Iraq later this year, they will wear desert uniforms and use military gear delivered to their country by a Patriot Wing air crew.

A Westover C-5A under aircraft commander Capt. Kenneth M. Shipley carried 46 tons of equipment and supplies to Georgia's capital of Tbilisi in October. The Georgians showed their appreciation for the assistance by giving VIP treatment to the crew and their Galaxy, including a visit from the nation's president and the American ambassador.

The mission followed a recent decision by Georgia to increase the number of their troops in Iraq from 159 to 850. Georgia is a country of about 4.7 million people that borders the Black Sea and straddles the Caucasus Mountains. In 1991 the Georgians declared their independence during the breakup of the Soviet Union.

The 337th Airlift Squadron crew delivered desert boots, canteens, belts and other uniform items. Also in the cargo compart-

ment were 50,000 square meters of heavy-duty camouflage material for military uniforms and field equipment and supplies. The equipment was scheduled to be delivered to a commando battalion preparing to deploy to Iraq.

As an indication of how much Georgia values the American support, the nation's president, Mikheil Saakashvili, was among dignitaries waiting to greet the Westover crew at the Tbilisi air field. President Saakashvili was joined by American Ambassador Richard Miles in a tour of the C-5A conducted by the air crew.

Crew members were pilots Maj. Juan Galindez and Maj. Vernon M. Wegener; flight engineers Master Sgt. Robert L. Stawasz, Master Sgt. Kenneth MacDougald and Staff Sgt. Kennan L. Steiger; loadmasters Master Sgt. Thomas M. O'Brien, Tech. Sgt. Daniel T. Sullivan, Tech. Sgt. James M. Whelton and Senior Airman Daniel C. Orcutt; and 439th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron maintainers Tech. Sgt. Brandon W. Ives and Tech. Sgt. Joann K. LaFleur.

Westover Patriots

Chief retires from air reserve technician status

Chief Master Sgt. Kenneth Gilbert, a flight engineer with more than 8,500 hours in the C-5 and C-130, retired from his air reserve technician status Oct. 1. He has been assigned to Westover since December 1973 – when the 439th was a tenant unit at the former Westover Air Force Base.

"In 1973 there were 16 C-123Ks and eight C-130B-models assigned to the 439th ... with the C-5 conversion (in 1987) the flight line took on a major change, it used to be divided into two separate sections with hangars between the two."

Chief Gilbert recalled some of his most memorable missions during his career, such as the breakup of the former Soviet Union and his first flight there.

"I flew a mission into Kiev and one into St. Petersburg with humanitarian cargo," he said. "I never imagined that I would be flying into Russia."

The other most memorable mission was during the onset of Desert Shield when his 337th Airlift Squadron brought cargo and troops to Saudi Arabia. "When I landed in Dhahran (Saudi Arabia), the majority of the C-5s were from Westover ... even though the sleeping quarters weren't very good initially ... morale and crew camaraderie was the highest I have ever seen it."

Chief Gilbert initially started out as a flight mechanic on C-123 Providers. He will remain as a traditional reservist with the 337th for another year and a half. "I do not have any specific plans as of yet and will take it as I go," he said.

The chief lives in Heath, Mass.



photo by Barry Stacy, 439th Communications Squadron

HAT TRICK - Chief Master Sgt. Kenneth Gilbert, 337th Airlift Squadron, explains the wear of his flight cap to Bement School fifth-graders during a C-5 tour in May.

AES captain wins shooting award in Virginia

Capt. Warren Smith, 439th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, recently won an individual shooting award at a national event held in October. He took second place in the North-South Skirmish Association National Matches.

He earned a silver medal for shooting the 100-yard Musket Individual Match in the "Striker" class. Captain Smith's team also won first place, gold medal in the uniform competition for accurate uniforms, accoutrements and knowledge of the unit's history during the American Civil War.

The matches were held at the N-SSA Home Range at Fort Shenandoah in Winchester, Va. It is the largest open air range in the US with 4,000 firing positions, Captain Smith said.

Civilian worker helps give page new name

John Barrett, who works in the Westover contracting office, recently e-mailed the 439th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office with his idea for a new name for

this highlights page. He cited simplicity with the name "Westover Patriots," which has joined the top of this page.



photo by Master Sgt. Shelli McCarthy, 439th ASTS

ASTS sergeant meets Catholic school students

Staff Sgt. Jennifer Koester, 439th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, recently visited with students at a local Catholic school to tell them about her deployment overseas. Sergeant Koester is pictured above showing Gary Chirgwin, a third-grader at St. Patrick's School in Chicopee, Mass., the proper way to fold the American Flag. Sergeant Koester is an aeromedical services journeyman with the 439th ASTS.

Hangar ceremony caps chief's 31 years at base

Article and photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Biscoe

With wife Nancy at his side and a formation of his troops standing at attention in front of him, **Chief Master Sgt. John M. Budenas** bid farewell to Westover in September.

Chief Budenas, former first sergeant with the 439th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, gave a heartfelt retirement speech during his ceremony held in Hangar 9. He served four years in the Air Force including a tour in Vietnam in 1969. The chief wrapped up his career of more than 30 years at Westover. He first started out as a mechanic working on the C-123 Providers at Hanscom Field, Bedford, Mass., in 1973. When the Air Force Reserve relocated the 901st Tactical Airlift Group from Hanscom to Westover in September 1973, the chief moved here too. For the next two decades, he worked in maintenance on the C-123s and C-130s at Westover, and in October 1987, on the conversion to C-5s.

Maj. Mark F. Wilson, AMXS commander, led a tribute of speeches.



FIRST OF ALL - Chief Master Sgt. John M. Budenas, right, is congratulated on his retirement by Senior Master Sgt. Earl E. Duncan Jr., 439th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron first sergeant.

The chief delivered his own thank you to his squadron and to his wife. Chief Budenas lives in Townsend, Mass., and said recently that he already misses the camaraderie at Westover.

"You folks are still a major part of my life! Happy memories get me through the tough times," he said. "Each and every one of you folks are my happy memories!"

Patriot People



photo by Master Sgt. Anne Ward

Tech. Sgt. Neal G. Normandin

Name: Neal G. Normandin
Rank: Technical sergeant
Age: 41
Address: East Longmeadow, Mass.
Unit: 439th Services Squadron
Position: Fitness noncommissioned officer in charge
Favorite food: Lasagna
Years of service: 17
Favorite sport: Softball
Favorite hobby: Working out
Ideal vacation: One week in St. Croix, Virgin Islands
Best way to relax: Reading
Preferred entertainment: Movies, spending time with friends
Favorite hero: My father
Favorite music: Classic rock
Favorite movie: Saving Private Ryan
Favorite aircraft: Harrier
Pet peeve: Mean people
What would I do if I won \$1 million: Build a house, set up a college fund for my daughter, Samantha, and go to Disney World, Florida

Patriot Praises

Reenlistments:

Chief Master Sgt.
Kenneth J. Gilbert

Senior master sergeant
Thomas V. Dzwonkus
Kenneth B. King
Scott E. Reed
Shane C. Robitaille
Daniel J. Turner

Master sergeant
Tracie A. Aube
James M. Doherty
Roland F. Greenwood Jr.
Gerard M. Leamy
Glenn C. Lesure
Robert P. Morin
Rafael A. Moz
Edward A. Perreira
Laura L. Perry
Robert L. Stawasz
Christopher L. Taylor
Robert R. Viel

Technical sergeant
Charles S. Anderson Jr.
James F. Anthony
John C. Assimotos
Scott William Blais
Daniel R. Boucher
Patrick J. Cunningham
Gabriela Grant
David J. Guzik
Bruce R. Lamay Sr.
Lowell T. Manning
Michael S. Moreland
Edward R. O'Boyle
Joseph P. Schneider
Donald R. Talbot
Steven R. Waite
Todd R. Zuzula

Staff sergeant
Wayne Anthony
Baptiste

Matthew Donald
Chouinard
Sonja L. Deyoe
Dannita Jo Farina
Ana E. Frias
Lommie Lee Jones
Kimberly L. Kopp
Epifanio Lopez II
John F. Lyons
Mark Robert
McAuliffe
Nicholas P. Perna
Brian P. Rose
John Francis
Sevigne Jr.
John Allen Shepard
John M. Takach
Kevin Vadeboncoeur

Senior airman
Christopher J.
Beaulieu
Nicholas Edward
Haskell
Clark
Michael J. Dupell Jr.
Katrina Anastasia
Fortin
Christopher Perry
Hadden
Richard M. Luttich
David M. McMenemy
Donald P. Merrill
Kevin M. Preston
Randall Lee Riddle Jr.
Sean E. Spellman

Promotions:

Master sergeant
Michael A. Wysocki
Scott J. Zapolski

Technical sergeant
Darren R. Padilla
Lori A. Rysedorph
Scott R. Trumble

Awards and Decorations

Air Force Achievement Medal

Technical sergeant

Danforth W. Moon Jr.
Glenn K. Phillips

Staff sergeant

Edna T. Bentley
Paul J. Czupkiewicz

Joann K. Lafleur

Robert F. Luby
Charles E. McDonald

Senior airman

Mark T. O'Connor
Kevin P. Deyo
Andres M. Rodriguez- Munoz

Community College of the Air Force graduates, October 2004

Senior Master Sgt.
Daniel J. Major

Marylynn Scherlin

Master sergeant

Joseph Fournier
Jeffrey Knight
Julie A. Prior

Staff sergeant

Gary Bacon
Lisa Dewar
Kimberly Giampietro
Eric Goodkowsky
Jayson Moats
Robert Q. Steele

Technical sergeant

James Anthony
Kevin Bowen
Glenn Connon
Marie Greenwood
David K. Hendrickson

Senior airman

Rachel Garcia
Michael Pasternak

Fall Classic

Winners gobble up big birds for Turkey Trot

by Senior Airman Tom Ouellette

EDITOR'S NOTE: Many of the participants' signatures were illegible and could not be verified at press time.

More than 24 runners laced up their running shoes and hit the pavement to compete in the Patriot Wing's Annual Turkey Trot during both days of the November A UTA.

Windy conditions did not affect the spirited competition as participants vied for base bragging rights and the event's coveted prize, 12-pound turkeys. The Turkey Trot separated racers in various categories based on gender and distance.

Triumphing in the women's 5-mile run was Shelley A. Martin with a time of 39:40.

A crowded field of runners in the men's

5-mile run prompted race officials to separate racers by age. In the 29-under group, Geann Pereira took top honors with a time of 32:10. Sam Ramos outpaced the 30 to 39-age-group at 35:15. Michael Vout edged pass opponents in the 40 to 49-age field at 28:22 and the 50-plus honors goes to Mr. Mornadez at 27:27.

In the women's 3-mile run, Kelly Braudis was victorious at 31:10 in the 30-plus field. In the 29-under field, 13-year-old Mariann Leach snuck past her 7-year-old sister, Abby, in a photo finish at 41:22.

Perhaps the Leach sisters get their competitive spirit from their dad, John Leach, a Westover Marine. He blazed past the competition in the 40-49 field of the men's 3-mile contest at 19:19. Other winners in the men's 3-mile race include Michael Sheehan at 23:52 (29-under; Manuel Chavez at 22:07 (30-39) and Wade Farris, at 25:09 (50-plus).

Molly took top honors in a new category this year, the four-legged field. Molly belongs to Col. Wade Farris, 439th AW commander and his wife, Kim. Molly completed



FINISH TIME - John McIntyre, left, and Dan Ernst complete the Turkey Trot as Glenn Connon clocks their times.

her Turkey Trot running with Mrs. Farris on Perimeter Road.



photos by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Biscoe

PACING - Manuel Chavez rounds the corner on Perimeter Road during the Turkey Trot on the November A UTA. He ran the 3-mile race at 22:07.

Campaign organizers hold fund-raiser at Turkey Trot

Tech. Sgt. Glenn Connon, Combined Federal Campaign co-chair, said more than \$230 was raised at the "K's for Caring" fund-raiser held with the Turkey Trot on the November A UTA.

As of early November, Sergeant Connon said an estimated \$14,000 had been raised for the CFC at Westover.

CFC money goes to charities through-

out the Pioneer Valley, locally and nationwide.

The Pioneer Valley CFC is a federal employee program that supports charity organizations through tax-deductible donations. The campaign wraps up Dec. 15. For more information call Sergeant Connon at Ext. 3296 or 2074 or any CFC key worker.

PATRIOT

www.afrc.af.mil/439aw

December UTA schedule

A UTA Dec. 4-5

No B UTA



439th AW/PA
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100 Lloyd Street
East Wing, Suite 103
CHICOPEE, MA 01022-1825

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Published monthly for Patriots like Tech. Sgt. Bobby S. Vongphakdy, Lynn, Mass., and 2,345 reservists of the 439th AW at Westover ARB, and geographically separated units.